



“Building Communities Together”

A Networking Tool of HUD's Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships

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MLK Spirit Alive in Communities

This past month we celebrated the life and accomplishments of a man of great vision whose struggle for equality and justice in leading the Civil Rights Movement continues to inspire us. While we may come from different faiths and backgrounds, we are committed to the common good and social justice Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. represents.

In honoring the contributions of this great man, we are reminded just how far we have come, while still seeing the challenges that lie ahead. A recently announced record \$6.5 billion lending discrimination settlement, while a huge victory for HUD, highlights that housing discrimination is still alive today, over thirty years after Dr. King marched on Washington.

Dr. King's memory lives on today in the Clinton Administration and HUD's efforts and the thousands of community and faith-based organizations across this country whose work reflects his vision. One such example is **Interfaith Action for Racial Justice, Inc. (IARJ), of Baltimore, Maryland**, which addresses the region's pressing economic and social problems by working to increase interracial and interreligious understanding in Baltimore City and surrounding counties.

Another example is the **FAITHS Initiative in San Francisco, California**. An interfaith network of more than 300 congregations, the *FAITHS Initiative* works to address the root causes of poverty and injustice in local neighborhoods

and in the region by promoting dialogue and partnership among congregations. Among its many contributions, *FAITHS Initiative* awards small grants to address race and community relations issues.

In **Sudbury, MA**, three congregations - one Jewish, one Catholic, and one United Methodist - are collaborating on a program called ***Students Together Opposing Prejudice (STOP)***. Developed in response to an anti-semitic incident, the program is designed to confront discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping among youth. Since its inception in 1991, more than 200 youth have participated in the program.

Nationally, the ***Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC)*** works through 65,000 African-American churches across the nation to foster unity, charity and fellowship. *CNBC* works to bring different racial groups together through its programs, especially its church rebuilding projects, in which nearly half the volunteers are Caucasian.

Through these and similar efforts by local organizations across the country, we may one day get to Dr. King's 'promised land.' To learn more about these ***Promising Practices*** garnered thru the President's Initiative for One America, visit www.whitehouse.gov. *Promising Practices* highlights effective organizations contributing to the country's ongoing dialogue on racial reconciliation. These programs show what we can do when we commit ourselves to finding the common good across racial, ethnic and cultural lines.

State of the Union

On Tuesday, January 19, 1999, President William Jefferson Clinton delivered his sixth State of the Union address. That evening, the President laid out a full agenda of forward-looking policies to continue to offer people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. Looking toward the 21st century, the President offered proposals to expand prosperity to the most left out corners of America.

Some of the proposals made by President Clinton: more support for community development banks and empowerment zones; 100,000 more housing vouchers; a plan to help businesses raise up to \$15 billion in private sector capital for inner cities and rural areas; safer and more livable communities with 30,000 more police; assistance to communities to save open spaces and reduce traffic congestion; raising the minimum wage; and expanding child care tax credits.

HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo will outline details of the HUD FY 2000 Budget beginning February 1. Look to “*Building Communities Together*” in February for what is in the budget for your organizations and communities.

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HUD Opens Doors to the Community

Community activists, clergy, area youth, law enforcement agents, and government officials recently gathered at the HUD DC Storefront for an evening of community fellowship. HUD DC Storefront Community Builders and representatives of HUD's Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships convened with the Alliance of Concerned Men, Concerned Brothers and Sisters of Benning Terrace, and Northwest Youth Working in Partnership for the viewing of the nationally televised ABC News Special "The Whole World Was Watching," followed by a town meeting. The gathering was designed to serve as a forum where the unified local community could assemble, exchange ideas and plan for the future.

The ABC Special, with Connie Chung and Diane Sawyer, depicted significant social and political events of 1968 followed by interviews with those who were part of each history-making occurrence. One of the segments featured the Alliance of Concerned Men, a DC non-profit, dedicated to empowering youth and eradicating youth violence.

The Alliance which began its work in SE Washington in 1991 gained notoriety in 1997 for its mediation of a truce between rival gangs in Benning Terrace, one of DC's most violent neighborhoods. Since the truce, January 29, 1997, murders in the neighborhood have

plummeted and the crime rate has decreased by 67%. The Alliance's founder, Tyrone Parker, was depicted in the special for his amazing struggles and lifelong journey from a convicted bank-robbler to a devoted, well-respected community activist.

Mrs. Kerry Kennedy-Cuomo, wife of Secretary Cuomo, was also featured with highlights of her outstanding domestic and international work with the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation.

In the subsequent dialogue, mediated by Larry Hicks, of WOL Radio, the theme was "Where Do We Go From Here?" Many well-thought comments, ideas, and suggestions were presented, but, the most insightful and useful words came from the youth in attendance. Several local youths spoke on how community relationships could be enhanced and how the work of the Alliance led to their personal transformations from unruly and misguided juveniles to young men and women determined to be assets to their communities. From the discussion rose the shared belief that models of the Alliance can and should be replicated in other neighborhoods, possibly by using churches as starting points.

HUD's Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships, HUD DC Storefront Community Builders and the Alliance have committed to sharing the model of success the Alliance has had in Washington with other communities.

Important Resources

This month we want to highlight some upcoming events the Administration and HUD are sponsoring that may be of interest to you. If you know of events you would like to share with the Center's network, fax information to 202/708-1160.

March 10, 1999: "Perceptions" exhibit featuring art from DC Metro survivors of homelessness and the struggles of poverty, Studio 1019, 1019 7th St. NW, Washington, DC. For information, call 202/523-4400.

March 28-30, 1999: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development healing neighborhoods conference, *Overcoming Racial and Cultural Conflicts*, in Arlington, VA. For information, call 800/955-2232.

Featured Best Practice

Friendship House Apartments in Louisville, Kentucky is a 192-unit, section 202 property in the old section of Louisville. The facility is part of a retirement campus that has two apartment buildings and a 126-bed nursing facility. Due to aging in place, average age 84, the need for assisted living units has grown. In December 1997, HUD granted, managing organization, Christian Church Homes' request to convert 41 units into Personal Care units. They had already converted 21 units in 1994 which proved to be an effective solution to the needs of their aging residents.

Resulting from converting these units, Friendship House Personal Care residents are able to function in the least restrictive, most homelike setting possible. The quality of life was increased through services and activities available to residents in the larger campus setting. As they age, many residents need additional services that are not normally offered in a 202 facility, but may not be ready for nursing home care. Among these services are a full-time nursing staff, medication supervision, and around-the-clock medical assistance. A social service staff ensures residents receive therapeutic and rehabilitative services as well as housekeeping and laundry services, assistance with daily living activities and three meals a day. Safety and accessibility needs were taken into consideration with each modified unit.

Contact: Linda Jones, Christian Church Homes of Kentucky, Inc., Louisville, KY, (502) 254-4205, Fax: (502) 254-4209

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This information has been edited from the John J. Gunther Best Practices on HUD's web site at <http://www.hud.gov/ptw/docs/kt0498.html>. The home page for the database is <http://www.hud.gov/ptw/menu.html>.